

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 SSM-03 DHA-02
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R 290711Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4243
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 8685

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJECT: ALMOGI REQUESTS US ASK SOVIETS TO PERMIT DIRECT
TRAVEL OF EMIGRANTS TO ISRAEL

1. IN CALL JUST PRIOR TO AMBASSADOR TOON'S DEPARTURE,
JOSEPH ALMOGI, CHAIRMAN OF THE JEWISH AGENCY, TOOK THE
OCCASION TO REQUEST THE AMBASSADOR'S GOOD OFFICES IN ASKING
THE SOVIETS TO PERMIT JEWISH EMIGRANTS TO TRAVEL DIRECTLY
FROM USSR TO ISRAEL, POSSIBLY ON ROMANIAN OR YUGOSLAV
AIRLINES. ACCORDING TO ALMOGI, THIS WOULD END THE PROBLEM OF
TRANSIT CAMPS AND DIFFERENT TREATMENT ACCORDED TO THOSE
SEEKING TO GO TO A DESTINATION OTHER THAN ISRAEL.

2. THOSE ARRIVING IN ISRAEL COULD STILL HAVE FREE CHOICE
OF ULTIMATE DESTINATION IF THEY DESIRED TO GO ELSEWHERE.
DIFFERENT TREATMENT ACCORDED TO DROPOUTS AND THOSE
COMMITTED TO GO TO ISRAEL IS SERIOUS SOURCE OF CONTENTION
AMONG JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS DEALING WITH THE TWO GROUPS OF
EMIGRANTS. HOWEVER, NO FINAL AGREEMENT HAS BEEN POSSIBLE ON
THIS ISSUE.

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3. ALMOGI CLAIMED USSR HAS EMIGRATION QUOTAS AND CONTROLS
DROPOUT RATE THROUGH PROFESSIONAL AND GEOGRAPHIC SECTION
OF THOSE PERMITTED TO LEAVE. TO COUNTER SUCH MANIPULATION,
DIRECT TRANSPORTATION TO ISRAEL AND UNIFORM TREATMENT
OF ALL EMIGRANTS UPON ARRIVAL IN ISRAEL WOULD BE BEST

SOLUTION.

4. ALL JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS EXCEPT HIAS HAVE NOW AGREED TO TRY FOR ONE YEAR NEW APPROACH OF MORE UNIFORM TREATMENT IN VIENNA FOR ALL ARRIVALS, ALMOGI CLAIMED. A NEW COMMITTEE OF FOUR AMERICANS HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO REVIEW THE PROBLEM; ITS MEMBERS ARE MAX FISHER, LAUTENBERG OF THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS, EUGENE GOLD OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR SOVIET JEWRY, AND JACOBSON OF HIAS.

5. AMBASSADOR TOON RESPONDED THAT THE PROBLEM OF DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF EMIGRANTS IN VIENNA WAS A MATTER FOR JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS TO SETTLE AMONG THEMSELVES. THE QUESTION OF BRINGING SOVIET EMIGRANTS DIRECTLY TO ISRAEL WAS CONSIDERED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AS A SENSITIVE ISSUE. MOREOVER, THE RUSSIANS MAY BE SATISFIED WITH THE 40 TO 50 PERCENT DROP-OUT RATE. IF ALL OR MOST OF THE EMIGRANTS WOULD GO TO ISRAEL THIS COULD CREATE FOR THE SOVIETS PROBLEMS WITH THE ARAB COUNTRIES. THUS A DEMARCHE FOR THE PURPOSE OF CHANGING THE PRESENT EMIGRATION ARRANGEMENTS COULD POSSIBLY BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND EVEN LEAD TO A REDUCTION OF THE NUMBERS PERMITTED TO LEAVE. HOWEVER, THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE UNDERSTOOD ALMOGI'S CONCERN AND HIS REQUEST WOULD BE TAKEN UNDER SERIOUS ADVISEMENT.
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